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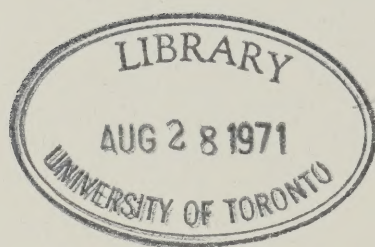


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Measure of the seventies

**Introductory Remarks by the
Honourable Robert Welch, Q.C., M.P.P. for Lincoln
Minister of Education**

on presentation of the Estimates of the Ontario Department
of Education, 1971-72, to the Standing Human Resources Committee
of the Ontario Legislature, July 16, 1971.





Into the seventies with two million students

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Mr. Chairman:

As in most other fields, the last twenty-five years have witnessed a period of tremendous and unprecedented growth in education.

Since the beginning of the post-war boom in the late 1940s, Ontario's school population growth has been among the highest of all jurisdictions in the Western World.

The number of elementary pupils has increased by three times since 1948, and within the same period, secondary enrolment increased by three and a half times.

In the last five years alone, between 1965 and 1970, the enrolment in elementary schools increased from 1,320,000 to 1,465,000. This is an 11 per cent increase, and to simply house these children, almost 5,000 new classrooms or their equivalent had to be provided.

In the same period, the secondary school enrolment increased from 410,000 to 557,000. This is an increase of 138,000 students — a staggering 33 per cent growth. To accommodate these students another 4,600 classrooms were required.

Taken together, these accommodation requirements mean that we have been opening the equivalent of a 50-room school every 10 days for the past five years.

When one considers the necessary planning, the design and building, the demands made on the construction and building supply industries, the furnishing and equipping, the co-ordination of transportation and, most important, the staffing and the design of programs, the full magnitude of this achievement becomes apparent.

It involved the collaborative efforts of local school boards, of the provincial government, of private industry, and of local communities all across Ontario. That it could be done — and was done — is perhaps one of the greatest examples we have of the co-operation and dynamism that characterize our province.

It has been a tremendous physical achievement simply to provide basic accommodation for the increasing numbers of students. But during this period we have not only provided for the sheer increase in population, but also managed to develop a fuller and more complete educational experience.

In 1965, 46 per cent of the students leaving secondary school had obtained a Secondary School Graduation or Honour Graduation Diploma. By 1970, that figure had increased by about a fifth to 55 per cent.

Present indications, however, point to the fact that the challenges we faced in the past in terms of the sheer magnitude of growth may now be over. Because of lower birth rates in recent years, elementary school enrolment has peaked in size and is expected to decline throughout the rest of this decade. And secondary school enrolment, although continuing to rise, is expected to peak within six years, after which it will likely decline in reflecting the lower birth rates currently influencing the elementary school enrolment.

Slowing down the cost spiral

Recognizing the implications of these changes, and wanting to reduce the heavy tax burden on the local taxpayer, this Government has taken a leadership role in educational finance by developing a new set of guidelines on educational expenditure. Summarized as briefly as possible, the four main objectives of these guidelines are as follows:

- 1 To approach quality education for the students of all ages in this province as our first priority in the distribution of available money.
- 2 To have the Provincial Government pay 60 per cent of the overall cost of elementary and secondary school education in Ontario by 1972.
- 3 To equalize the financial capability of widely different jurisdictions so that, as far as possible, no community will be penalized by its lack of assessment as compared with larger, high assessment communities, and no urban areas with special inner-city needs will be forced to meet these needs unaided.
- 4 To control the cost of education in Ontario through controlling the *rate of increase* in educational expenditure.

To be more specific, let me first point out that when the Government announced its intention to pay 60 per cent of the costs of education by 1972, the Department of Education had already established ceilings on the expenditures that were eligible for grant. At that time, a board could, if it wished, spend above the grant ceilings, and pass on 100 per cent of the extra cost to its ratepayers. But Ontario has learned from experience that such an arrangement is not an effective deterrent to substantial increases in the cost of education.

As a result, ceilings were developed to control the rate of increase of educational spending. These ceilings were determined after examining the expenditure estimates of virtually every board in the Province, and were designed to ensure that a high standard of education could be maintained where expenditures were high, and programs extended where expenditures were low. The ceilings apply to "ordinary expenditures" only and are not applicable to debt charges, capital expenditure from revenue funds, or expenditure for transportation.

A board's 1971 ceiling on ordinary expenditures for elementary schools is its 1970 ceiling for grant purposes increased by up to \$75, with a maximum of \$545 per pupil. For secondary school purposes, its 1971 ceiling is its 1970 ceiling increased by up to \$75, with a maximum of \$1,060 per pupil. For boards in defined cities, the grant ceiling is 10 per cent higher for elementary school pupils and 5 per cent higher for secondary school pupils. These additional amounts have been provided to enable boards in large cities to cope with "inner-city" situations such as the language and cultural problems of many immigrants, and socio-economic problems that are more prevalent in large urban municipalities. For boards in the territorial districts, the ceilings are 10 per cent higher for both elementary and secondary pupils. This is necessary because of the higher cost of living in the North combined with the sparsity factor.

In 1970, the ceilings on ordinary expenditures for grant purposes were \$500 and \$1,000 for elementary and secondary school pupils respectively. For those boards that were spending in 1970 in excess of their ceilings, the Department is requiring a one-third reduction in the percentage rate of

over-spending. For example, a board that spent \$600 for an elementary school pupil in 1970 had an expenditure that was 20 per cent above its ceiling. *In 1971, such a board is required to reduce the percentage rate of over-spending by one-third of 20 per cent or to 13.4 per cent.* This means that its ceiling for 1971 expenditure is 113.4 per cent of \$545 or \$618.03 per pupil, an amount which is greater by \$18 than the expenditure per pupil in 1970. For those boards whose spending levels in 1970 were below the ceilings, the increase in 1971 can be, as I have indicated, as much as \$75 per pupil.

Considerable use of the word "cutbacks" has occurred — with the plain implication that the ceilings have forced boards to reduce the number of dollars they could (and would like to) spend on each pupil. The ceilings are so designed, however, that, with the possible exception of two relatively small boards in the territorial districts, *no board will be forced to reduce the number of dollars it can spend on a pupil in 1971.*

In fact, the grant assistance to school boards under the 1971 Grant Regulation will be approximately 20 per cent higher than for 1970. The Department's calculations indicate that before it would be required to spend less per pupil in 1971 than in 1970, an elementary school panel of a board of education would have been exceeding its 1970 ceiling by 33 per cent, and a secondary school panel by 20 per cent. No board or panel was exceeding its ceiling to that extent and consequently none will be forced to spend fewer dollars per pupil in 1971 than it spent in 1970.

I have already made reference to the necessity of providing higher ceilings for the defined cities. It should be noted that the Department is also cognizant of the needs of boards serving developing suburbs. After the need for new school buildings in these areas is established, the grants paid toward the construction of schools are very generous. Because these costs are in the extraordinary category, they are not affected by the expenditure limitations. I would add, too, that as the enrolment increases, this increase is reflected immediately in higher grants.

The Department has every reason to believe that the resulting deceleration in the rate of increase in spending is a realistic, attainable goal. The determination of the order and choice of priorities to meet the constraints is left to the boards in order that there be maximum flexibility to adjust to local situations.

I might also add that a careful review of the ceilings for 1972 is already under way, with particular emphasis being placed on possible weighting factors. We shall be working in conjunction with The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, a number of school boards, and several other bodies in attaining this objective.

And before I leave the subject of educational finance, may I make reference to the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology across the province.

It is of interest to note that for the first time, in this fiscal year, the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Ryerson Polytechnical Institute will be receiving their operating funds based on a formula which has been developed on the same general principles as those underlying the financing of the universities of this province. By this means the Government will be able to estimate more accurately the amount of funds required to support a predicted enrolment, and the colleges in turn can estimate their operating income on which to construct their operating budgets.

Quality and curriculum

But the era of bricks and mortar in education is coming to an end, and we are now turning more of our attention from the quantitative to the qualitative aspects of education in Ontario.

Today we are standing on the threshold of a new era in society as we approach the life of our province — and the life of each individual in this province — with a renewed emphasis on the priority of truly human values. And although this shift toward greater human responsiveness is reflected in virtually all aspects of society, nowhere is it more evident than in the Department of Education. In fact, this emphasis is an integral part of virtually every one of our programs.

In a democratic society that values the individual, education is not satisfactory unless it recognizes the unique personality, the unique abilities, needs, and interests, and the unique aspirations of each individual student.

Few jurisdictions of comparable size anywhere in the world have been able to go as far towards realizing this aim as we have in Ontario, and in a very real sense we are only just beginning.

One aspect of meeting this need is the provision of individual attention to students, and part of this goal involves pupil-teacher ratios. In elementary schools, the overall provincial pupil-teacher ratio in 1954 was 32 to 1. By 1970, it had dropped to 25 to 1.

In secondary schools, the ratio in 1954 was 25 to 1. By 1970 it had dropped to 16.5 to 1. And this, it must be remembered, took place during a time of unprecedented increase in the number of students in our classrooms. At the same time, programs of a more diversified and flexible nature have been developed.

The official guidelines for the primary and junior divisions, as expressed in the P1,J1 series of curriculum documents, expresses an educational philosophy of guided growth in the attainment of basic learning skills, of sensitivity to individual needs, and of humaneness in the handling of children. With this official backing, more and more of the teachers in our elementary schools are learning how to give practical expression in their classrooms to this basic philosophy.

At the same time, the secondary school program is undergoing a series of basic changes designed to give effect to a similar philosophy of individualization, but in a way consistent with the greater maturity and changing needs of older students.

One change that has been made to facilitate the implementation of this philosophy has been to award a diploma, not on the basis of successful completion of a program specified by the Department, but rather for the successful completion of a certain number of credits which are largely chosen by the student. As of September 1970, one-half of our secondary schools had fully, and another 19 per cent partly, implemented this change.

Another important aspect of individualization is the creation of a system that allows students to move ahead in the subjects in which they are successful, without having to advance lock-step, grade by grade, on an all-or-nothing basis. As of September 1970, 60 per cent of our secondary schools had fully

converted to this more flexible method of subject as opposed to grade promotion, and a further 25 per cent had made the change in part.

In order to make the full program of the school available to all students, the preparation of individual timetables is required, so that each student can select his own program rather than being confined to the program of a particular class. About two-thirds of our high schools now provide individual timetables for each of their students, and another 25 per cent are able to do this for at least a proportion of the student body.

By the beginning of the 1972-73 school year, all of our secondary schools will have converted to the new plan and will be further modifying their organizational structure to better meet the needs of students.

The schools have never before offered so extensive and varied a program. In the elementary schools, opportunities for outdoor and out-of-school education are now common, as are the use of concrete materials and an ever-widening range of non-print media. No longer is education confined "between the four walls of the schoolroom and the two covers of the textbook." Materials and methods are becoming available that allow each teacher to provide the kind of learning environment and tools suitable to each child.

Special programs for special needs

In the secondary schools the Department of Education has made available more than 150 curriculum guidelines. These guidelines, when adapted within the school according to its particular needs, generate literally hundreds of courses designed for different stages of maturity and varying interests and abilities.

Schools also have the opportunity of developing courses beyond the rationale of the Departmental guidelines in order to meet special needs and interests.

Over 500 of these locally developed courses have been approved by the Department for diploma credit in the school year 1971-72. The calibre of these courses is such that it has been possible to approve over 90 per cent of the requests made. This is a tribute to the professional competence of our teachers and their supervisory officials, and is a development that was never before considered possible in this province on such a large scale.

In striving toward the ideal of quality education for all people in Ontario, particular mention should be made of recent achievements in the area of special education.

Very generally, a growing response to children with special learning needs is being felt in all parts of the province, reflected particularly in the number of staff appointments at the board level, and the significant growth in programs since 1965 dealing with special education.

Based upon this growing development, I have great pleasure in announcing that changes will be made in the Regulations governing the education of trainable retarded children.

Effective September 1972, retarded children will be eligible to apply for full-time school attendance at the same age as any other child, and will have the right to attend until the age of twenty-one, and not be limited to the age of eighteen as is presently the case.

Admission boards under the jurisdiction of the divisional boards of education will evaluate the readiness of each retarded child for schooling, and will determine the extent of their attendance period at the schools. These changes will firmly establish the fact that school law governing the basic rights of attendance apply to all children — their handicapping condition notwithstanding — and further that divisional boards of education have a clear-cut responsibility to meet the needs of all children within their jurisdiction.

A number of boards of education may wish to implement this policy during the 1971-72 school year, and individual applications to effect this change will be favourably considered.

These changes, however, will in no way limit the Department's involvement in educational programs for the retarded in institutional care. In accordance with the pattern established in 1966, the Department of Education will continue to fulfill its responsibility for staffing and conducting the program of education within hospital schools.

The successful partnership in this program between the Department of Education and the Department of Health is also evidenced in the continuing development of the regional diagnostic, assessment, and treatment centres established as a result of the White Paper tabled by the Minister of Health in 1967.

The Government is also embarking on the construction of a new Regional Centre for the Hearing Handicapped in London to provide for expanded opportunities for the hearing impaired in Western Ontario. In addition to operating as a school, it will serve as a Resource Centre for school boards, parents, and children. A new Sports Building is under construction at the School for the Deaf in Belleville, which it is hoped will be completed for school opening in September. And extensive renovations have been undertaken at the School for the Blind in Brantford, with construction already begun on new facilities to be opened in 1972.

The teacher today

But so much of what we do — whether in the area of primary and secondary education, or the programs of special education offered throughout the province — depends on the capabilities of the individual teacher. For this reason, I would now like to turn my attention briefly to the subject of teacher education.

One of the goals to which this Government is deeply committed is the upgrading of academic qualifications for teachers in Ontario schools. In 1969, the academic entrance requirement for elementary teacher education was raised to Grade 13 standing with an average of at least 60 per cent. This year, the requirement is being raised to one year beyond Grade 13 in an academic degree program at an accredited university, comprising a minimum of five full-credit university courses.

An announcement has now been made that the academic requirement for entrance to a teachers' college in Ontario in 1973 for most prospective teachers will be an approved university degree in arts or science.

But changes in the entrance qualifications reflect only one area where this upgrading is taking place. Another is the integration of teachers' colleges with universities. The report of the Minister's committee on the training of elementary teachers was tabled in the Legislature in March, 1966. At that time, the Minister of Education stated:

"The Department and the Minister are in complete agreement with the general program (of integrating the teachers' colleges and universities) suggested, and it will be the policy of my Department to implement plans to this end as quickly as possible"

In fact, Lakehead Teachers' College was integrated with Lakehead University on July 1, 1969. The University of Ottawa Teachers' College was integrated with the University of Ottawa on September 1, 1969, and Windsor Teachers' College was integrated with the University of Windsor on July 1, 1970. Agreement has now been reached as well for the integration of the St. Catharines Teachers' College with Brock University.

Even within the teachers' college courses themselves important improvements have been made. In 1968, the program of elementary education at the teachers' colleges was completely revised by a committee of principals and the staff of the Teacher Education Branch. The revised program reduced the final examinations from ten to five, and placed renewed emphasis on foundation subjects and curriculum studies.

In 1970, the Primary School Specialist Course was also revised to place more emphasis on child growth and development, the child and society, and curriculum studies.

In addition, practice teaching programs, normally nine weeks long during the academic year, are now being planned in much closer co-operation with college area school boards and their officials.

Into the community

Before concluding my remarks at this time, I would simply like to add a few words about the present activities of the Youth and Recreation Branch in the area of citizen participation and the more meaningful use of so-called leisure time.

With no accepted traditions and few established principles for guidance, the Department of Education is continuing to take the initiative in testing new ideas and experimenting with new techniques to encourage people to become more involved within their own communities, and acquire a stronger voice in making those decisions that directly influence their lives.

To meet the changing needs of the people of Ontario, the services provided by the Youth and Recreation Branch have been expanded in the following areas:

- A consultative service has been developed that is accessible to municipal authorities and community agencies within the province.
- Several community-school projects have been undertaken in which we are attempting to illustrate how communities may benefit from an expanded use of their schools, and how schools in turn may enrich their programs by using the community as an alternative to the classroom.

- Increased attention has been given to the cultural interests of people through such activities as the Ontario Theatre Conference, which resulted in the formation of Theatre Ontario, a parallel to Sport Ontario which was formed three years ago. A special focus has also been directed on the arts through such summer programs as Youtheatre (now decentralized into seven regions), Summer Sounds in Music, Art Trek, and Craft Production Centres.

- Greater emphasis has been placed on the well-established Youth-in-Action Program. This co-operative venture has now been expanded to include 85 communities across Ontario, and involves many young people who have been given their first opportunity to contribute directly to the development of their own community or agency as an alternative to summer employment.

- Added support has been given for participation in physical activities through the Province of Ontario Winter Games, and additional encouragement provided to sports governing bodies through increased financial support for the hiring of executive and technical directors.

- Greater assistance has been provided for the growing profession of recreationists by encouraging the organization of the Ontario Recreation Society, by supporting the formation of the Ontario Recreation Educators' Association, and by stimulating and coordinating recreation research through the Ontario Research Council on Leisure which publishes *Recreation Review*.

- The Provincial Institute has been established in two new regions, where community leaders and teachers for adult classes can take part in leadership training programs offered in co-operation with a Regional Council, made up of representatives from the community, the school system, and the local community college.

Throughout all of these expanded services, the Branch left the responsibility for planning and evaluating so-called leisure programs with the participants and with local agencies created to operate these programs. With only a few exceptions, the Youth and Recreation Branch is assisting, enabling, and encouraging meaningful participation in society without becoming a direct operator of program activities.

Conclusion

In short, important changes are presently taking place in virtually every aspect of Departmental activity. Since I have only touched on a few of these changes in my introductory remarks, I look forward to discussing in fuller detail these and other developments as the estimates are presented. I hope particularly that we will have an opportunity to discuss in fuller detail some of the implications of our present trend toward greater local autonomy, especially as it reflects our interest in meeting the individual needs of students, and our redefinition of schools as true community resources.

Although it is true that there is "no royal road to learning", we must recognize that a society that is insensitive to its children is also insensitive to its future. Through a responsible use of human and financial resources, we in Ontario have been able to build a broad network of educational opportunities which rivals any other educational system in the world. All of us in the Department of Education are committed to the goal of providing an environment for learning experiences which will stimulate all students to become independent, mature, and responsible citizens, and I am optimistic that with increased understanding and co-operation, our leadership position in education will be strengthened and improved in the months and years to follow.

